

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-15 DRC-01 /132 W

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1203

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 10833

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:MILI,IT

SUBJECT: REDUCTION OF ITALIAN CONSCRIPTION TERMS

REF: USNATO 4267 (LIMDIS)

1. IN OCTOBER 5 MEETING OF SENATE COMMITTEE ON DEFENSE AFFAIRS, DEFENSE MINISTER TANASSI ANNOUNCED ITALIAN PLANS TO REDUCE ARMY AND AIR FORCE CONSCRIPTION TERMS FROM 15 TO 12 MONTHS, AND NAVY TERMS FROM 24 TO 18 MONTHS. HE SAID STUDIES ON THE SUBJECT WERE IN THEIR FINAL STAGES AND THAT A FORMAL PROPOSAL WOULD SOON BE SUBMITTED TO THE PARLIAMENT. TANASSI EMPHASIZED THAT THE CONVERSION WOULD HAVE TO BE IMPLEMENTED GRADUALLY. WHILE IT IS STILL UNCLEAR AS TO WHEN NEW TERMS WILL COME INTO EFFECT, INDICATIONS POINT TO LATE NEXT YEAR, POSSIBLY JANUARY 1, 1975.

2. COMMENT: WE HAVE DISCUSSED THESE NEW CONSCRIPTION TERMS
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WITH KNOWLEDGEABLE ITALIAN OFFICIALS IN BOTH THE FOREIGN OFFICE

AND MOD, NOTING THEIR UNTIMELINESS IN THE CONTEXT OF BURDEN-SHARING AND OUR CURRENT EFFORTS TO IMPROVE NATO'S CONVENTIONAL CAPABILITY. THE UNIVERSAL RESPONSE HAS BEEN THAT THE GOI HAD NO CHOICE GIVEN THE SEVERE PRESSURES THAT HAVE BEEN GENERATED BY THE PARLIAMENT, SPECIFICALLY THE CHAMBER AND SENATE DEFENSE COMMITTEES, TO REDUCE THE DRAFT TERMS. THESE OFFICIALS MAINTAIN THAT THE GOI DID WELL TO HOLD OUT THIS LONG BEFORE AGREEING TO THE REDUCTIONS, IN THE FACE OF SIMILAR MOVES BY SOME OF HER NATO PARTNERS. BEAUDRY

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